

**State Board of Education
Summary of Transformation Discussion with Parents
October 16, 2007**

Members of the State Board of Education met during the afternoon of Tuesday, October 16th with approximately 40 students to begin a public engagement process regarding the future of education in Vermont. This discussion was kicked off by the release of *The Future of Education in Vermont*, an education transformation discussion document recently adopted by the State Board of Education. As with the morning's discussion with students, the discussion was facilitated by Department of Education staff members. Parents were split into three groups to respond to three questions:

- What current practices would you like to see established system wide?
- What new practices would you like to see established system wide?
- What questions does the document raise for you as a parent?

Following is a summary of the roundtable discussion with parents who have children in public schools and in home study programs:

Current practices parents would like to see established include

- individual pacing and choices,
- multiple pathways to learning,
- positive relationships with instructors,
- Responsive Classroom and Continental Math League programs,
- more connection with parents and communities,
- student peer support and empowerment,
- period scheduling,
- project-based learning,
- college connections and accessibility,
- school choice,
- and flexibility.

Parents were also able to identify new and upcoming practices they would like to see established statewide, including

- hybrid education,
- multiple pathways including online learning,
- connections between schools to maximize resources,
- flexibility or change to the traditional school day,
- community support and interaction,
- one-on-one teacher mentors or advocates,
- individual assessments and standards,
- connection to real-life and life skills,
- learning responsive to what students want to learn,
- Individual Learning Plans,
- variety, and
- preparing students for the virtual future.

The Board also asked parents to identify what questions the document raised for them. These included:

- questions of community needs and school partnerships,
- better support systems for students and for parent-school connections,
- a focus on learning styles or individual learning,
- education funding,
- school choice,
- indicators of results,
- how to bring teachers along and how to educate them,
- will this keep kids in school,
- how to implement this,
- what are 21st century skills,
- what is (and how does this relate to) *High Schools on the Move*,
- how much homework is reasonable,
- why do we need testing and what does it tell us,
- how can we think outside the box, and
- what is included in this “education system.”

Much of the time on the next few State Board monthly meeting agendas will be dedicated to similar conversations between State Board members and representatives of various constituent groups. Future meetings will include teachers, principals, superintendents, school board members, legislators and other political leaders, representatives of the business community and other constituent groups. The public is encouraged to participate in the process – the desired state document can be viewed and comments can be made at http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/future_of_education.html.